

**LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY  
OFFICE OF FISCAL AND MANAGEMENT ANALYSIS**

301 State House  
(317) 232-9855

**FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**LS 7787**

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 518

**DATE PREPARED:** Jan 12, 2001

**BILL AMENDED:**

**SUBJECT:** Domestic Violence.

**FISCAL ANALYST:** Mark Goodpaster

**PHONE NUMBER:** 232-9852

**FUNDS AFFECTED:** X **GENERAL**  
**DEDICATED**  
**FEDERAL**

**IMPACT:** State & Local

**Summary of Legislation:** This bill has the following provisions:

(A) It eliminates prepayment of filing fees, witness fees, and service of process fees for proceedings filed to obtain a protective order to prevent domestic violence. It allows the court to impose filing fees on a person against whom the order is entered.

(B) It provides that commission of an offense in the presence or within hearing of a child is an aggravating factor that would justify an increased term of imprisonment or consecutive sentences.

(C) It expands the types of protective orders to which the crime of stalking applies and provides that violation of a protective order issued by an Indian tribe or other related tribal government constitutes invasion of privacy.

**Effective Date:** Upon passage.

**Explanation of State Expenditures:** Provision B: Under current law, the court may consider any of 13 factors as aggravating circumstances to determine whether a criminal defendant's sentence should either be increased to the maximum term allowed under law or to impose consecutive terms of imprisonment. Adding this 14th circumstance may increase the prison terms of some criminal defendants.

The following table shows the minimum sentence, presumptive sentence, and the maximum sentence that an offender can receive under current law.

Felony Class	Minimum	Presumptive	Maximum
A	45 years	55 years	65 years
B	20 years	30 years	50 years
C	6 years	10 years	20 years
D	six months	1.5 years	3 years

The average expenditure to house an adult offender was \$20,700 in FY 1999. Individual facility expenditures ranged from \$14,936 to \$37,807. (This does not include the cost of new construction.) If offenders can be housed in existing facilities with no additional staff, the average cost for medical care, food, and clothing is approximately \$1,825 annually, or \$5 daily, per prisoner.

Provision C will add certain violations of protective orders as offenses that could be punished as Class C felonies. The terms for a Class C felony are shown in the table above.

**Explanation of State Revenues:** Provision A: This provision would result in a revenue loss to the State General Fund ranging between \$25,000 and \$50,000. However, if legislation prohibiting the payment of filing fees to have a protective order issued in the case of domestic violence charges is not implemented, the state may lose as much as \$7 M in grants from federal sources.

*Background:* Current statute, IC 33-19-5-4, treats petitions for protective orders as civil filings and charges a \$100 filing fee. Of this fee, a petitioner may pay \$35 upon filing and pay the balance at a later time. This same section also allows the court to waive the fee and require the responding party to pay either the entire fee of \$100 or the \$65 balance. By another section of the statute (IC 34-26-2-4), the court may waive filing fees for protective orders if the petitioner can document an inability to pay the fee. If the fee is waived, the court may order the filing fee to be paid by the responding party.

In practice, counties may treat filing fees for domestic violence cases in one of three ways. They may waive the entire filing fee, charge an initial \$35 and waive the remaining balance of \$65 for a protective order, or allow the petition to be filed in small claims court and charge a \$35 fee. Consequently, the specific revenue loss from this bill is difficult to estimate.

*Estimated Number of Cases Affected:* In 1999, 21,066 protective orders were reported to be filed in Indiana's courts. Of these, the Marion County Clerk's Office estimates that about 60% of these filings are for domestic violence-related cases. The Marion County Clerk also reports that Marion County no longer collects the filing fee for protective orders in domestic violence cases. Consequently, the number of estimated filings that could be affected by this bill is 10,332.

*Estimating the Potential Revenue Loss:* It is assumed that the revenue loss from this bill would be from the reduction in the number of filers who would no longer pay the initial \$35 filing fee. This is because this bill does not change the current provision in statute that allows the court to order the responding party to pay either the entire fee or the \$65 balance. The low and high estimates, based upon information received from county clerks, assume that under current practice between 10% and 20% of the filers will pay the initial \$35 fee in domestic violence cases.

Because 70% of the filing fee is deposited in the State General Fund, the revenue loss will range between \$25,000 and \$50,000, as described in the following table.

	<b>Low</b>	<b>High</b>
Protective Order Filings in 1999	21,066	21,066
Percent Domestic (Based on Marion County Estimates)	60%	60%
Estimated Number of Protective Order Filings for Domestic Violence Cases	12,640	12,640
Adjusted Number Paying Filing Fees Excluding Marion County Filings:	10,332	10,332
Fee Paid	\$35	\$35
Assumed Percent Paying	10%	20%
Estimated Loss of Court Fee Revenue	\$36,162	\$72,324
Loss of State Share of Court Fee Revenue at 70%	\$25,313	\$50,627
Loss of Local Share of Court Fee Revenue at 30%	\$10,849	\$21,697

*Federal Funding:* If the current statute is not amended to automatically waive filing fees and other charges when a protective order has been requested, the state and local programs would no longer be eligible for funding through the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC) under the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). Between 1997 and 2000, Indiana received the following funds. These funds were used for providing financial assistance to local programs that assist victims of domestic abuse.

<b>Year</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>
Revenue Received	\$8,546,000	\$5,889,000	\$5,053,000	\$7,873,000

Provision C: Besides a term of incarceration, a Class C felony is also punishable by a maximum fine of \$10,000. Criminal fines are deposited in the Common School Fund. If the case is filed in a circuit, superior, or county court, 70% of the \$120 court fee that is assessed and collected when a guilty verdict is entered would be deposited in the state General Fund. If the case is filed in a city or town court, 55% of the fee would be deposited in the state General Fund.

#### **Explanation of Local Expenditures:**

**Explanation of Local Revenues:** Provision A: Counties and municipal governments receive 30% of court fees. Consequently, the revenue loss to these entities would range between \$10,800 and \$21,700, as described in the table above. However, this bill would also prevent the potential revenue loss that local governments would experience if federal assistance for local programs which assist victims of domestic violence (described under state revenues) is eliminated.

A revenue loss may also occur to Marion County Small Claims Courts, if petitions for protective orders are currently filed in these courts. The filing fee in the Marion County Small Claims Court is \$50.50. This entire fee is deposited into the township general funds or paid to elected constables and their deputies. No portion of the \$50.50 small claims filing fee is deposited into the state or county general funds.

Provision C: If additional court actions occur and a guilty verdict is entered, local governments would receive revenue from the following sources: (1) The county general fund would receive 27% of the \$120 court fee that is assessed in a court of record. Cities and towns maintaining a law enforcement agency that prosecutes at least 50% of its ordinance violations in a court of record may receive 3% of court fees. (2) A \$3 fee would

be assessed and, if collected, would be deposited into the county law enforcement continuing education fund.  
(3) A \$2 jury fee is assessed and, if collected, would be deposited into the county user fee fund to supplement the compensation of jury members.

**State Agencies Affected:** Criminal Justice Institute.

**Local Agencies Affected:** Programs providing assistance to domestic abuse victims.

**Information Sources:** 1999 Indiana Judicial Report, Indiana Code, Criminal Justice Institute, Marion County Clerk of the Circuit Court.